

Mr. Speaker, I encourage you to join me in continuing the work of this committed visionary and powerful voice for equality. Please bring the bill to the floor.

#### WITNESS WEDNESDAY: FACES OF THE UNEMPLOYED

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, in the United States, we have always had a bipartisan tradition of assisting fellow hardworking Americans who have fallen on hard times—until now. As they are looking for their next job, we used to make sure that they had assistance through unemployment insurance to cover their basic needs. That is why yesterday I stood with Congresswoman DINA TITUS, DONNA EDWARDS, GWEN MOORE, and nearly a dozen group advocates for what we are calling “Witness Wednesdays.” We all read stories about real people, submitted by them, who are struggling since their unemployment insurance has expired.

During that event, the National Women’s Law Center released a study with some very sobering statistics. Women, particularly older women, women of color, and women heads of households, are deeply affected by unemployment, as are their children by the lack of emergency unemployment insurance benefits.

Last year, in my State of Illinois, more than 140,000 children lived in households headed by a long-term unemployed parent. Also, in my State, by the end of the year, nearly a quarter-million people will be left without benefits they need to meet their families’ basic needs if we don’t renew emergency unemployment insurance.

These are real people and real families behind these numbers. These are people looking for jobs. I am going to read four stories from Illinoisans who have suffered setbacks as they look for the work they need—for us to renew unemployment insurance without any further delay.

Chris from Glenview, Illinois, says:

My husband and I will never recover financially and are praying we will not lose our home. I don’t think I will ever be able to retire, which is concerning as I have health problems. My 28-year-old son is still living at home because he was unemployed for over a year and is now serving coffee for minimum wage. He has a bachelor’s degree from Loyola University, and between his student loans and our parent loans, we will all be in debt for the rest of our lives. We are not alone. I know of so many who are struggling as we are.

Sue from Chicago says:

Due to new management at the HIV/AIDS agency where I worked for over 10 years, I was fired on May 23 in order for them to save money. I am 58 years old, have an autoimmune liver disease that limits me physically and requires regular health care from specialists, as well as six medications. I have no savings and retirement is a laughable mat-

ter. Because I had no warning that this was going to happen, I am now looking at having no income, no health, and having to move from Chicago to downstate Springfield, where the cost of living is much lower, though job prospects are dismal.

Dinah from Chicago says:

I am losing my hair, apartment, and car. I have borrowed from everyone in my family, hoping to pay them back soon. I have worked since 1993 and am now unemployed. Soon I will be in a shelter, car repossession, and bald. I am looking for work. I have been on several interviews but so far no luck.

And Celia from Chicago says:

I had a job interview in December 2013, about the time my unemployment ran out. I really wanted this job. It was not just the fact that I would be able to pay bills; the work would be rewarding. Unfortunately, the tension I felt when it was clear that I had to get this position, that there would be no extension of benefits, caused me to freeze up at the interview when asked to display my skills. This had never happened to me. I am usually the type to have no problems once I land the interview.

My confidence is way down. I am 62. I have no income and can’t seem to find decent jobs to even apply to. I have had to regularly take money out of my retirement savings in order to stay out of debt. The worst thing about this time after a good career is to feel dropped, disappeared, and no longer of value. There is a dry feeling, dusty, of everything being cheap and on sale and no way to get back. I am ashamed of being out of the work world.

Chris, Sue, Dinah, and Celia are 4 of nearly 5 million Americans who will continue to suffer and struggle if we don’t renew emergency unemployment insurance by the end of this year. We should vote and pass the bill to renew unemployment insurance without any further delay.

#### HAPPY JUNETEENTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, today is June 19, an ordinary day in the lives of many, many Americans. That is why it is important to come to the floor and wish so many in our Nation Happy Juneteenth. For some, that may be a foreign terminology. But we are now in the 149th year of the 1865 Emancipation Proclamation for several States in the Deep South.

Those who know their history would say the Emancipation Proclamation was in 1863. They are absolutely right. But it took 2 years for States like Texas, Louisiana, and many others to, unfortunately, receive notice that the slaves were free. Two more years my fellow Texans, African American slaves, had to languish in the abomination of slavery because someone failed to think it was important enough to reach those boundaries and say we were free.

So it speaks very loudly to the reason I am an advocate and a fighter that justice must be maintained no matter who you are in this country. Those in Texas that, as I speak, are commemorating and celebrating Juneteenth

Freedom Day, are proudly acknowledging, not their fault that they did not know, not a joke, not humorous, but a sad statement which we in Texas and Southern States have turned into a joyful jubilee. We celebrate freedom wherever and however we can.

This Congress needs to be a promoter of freedom and justice. I join my colleagues in being appalled at the fact that we have not yet extended unemployment insurance for hardworking Americans. Let me say that again: unemployment insurance. It means that it is not a handout; it means that these are individuals who worked for weeks, months, years, decades. They have given back to America. Now they have fallen on difficult times.

Because of this leadership in this House of Representatives, we have not been able to put the extension of the unemployment insurance passed in the other body on the floor of the House. That means in my district that individuals who were rehabilitating themselves and were working and fell upon hard times because of the economy have no jobs and cannot get unemployment insurance.

When I met with some of them. A trained welder said, I want to work, I am between jobs, and he was literally driven to homelessness and walking the streets because we could not give him unemployment insurance based upon the fact that he has worked—or those who are now losing homes or not able to pay their rent.

Where is the mercy and justice? Are we following in the pathway of Juneteenth when we did not tell thousands upon thousands of slaves you were free? I thought America would not return to the devastation and dastardliness of injustice to anyone. Let us put unemployment insurance on the floor of the House and address the questions of Americans who have worked and contributed to society.

Then, Mr. Speaker, I would argue that there is an injustice going on in Iraq. I traveled to Iraq many times during the raging war. I saw the valiant soldiers, many of whom maybe after I left were part of those who were casualties. I had in my office the list of casualties in the 18th Congressional District. I would be very mindful of going back into that quagmire.

What I would say is that America does stand for justice and democracy. We should have the position to treat Sunnis and Shiites and Kurds freely and justly, and that they have to come together and treat each other with respect. We should call upon Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, Jordan, and Yemen, we should give them support—the Arab League—to stand Iraq up and to tell this leader, who is a selfish leader, who is not in any way reflected on bringing people together, that he must bring people together. And we must say to the ISIS that the world will not stand for its violence and its horribleness.

And yes, we must say to those who are in the yesteryear, who were part of